

IN THE CLAIMS

Claim 1 (currently amended): A method comprising:

stocking a predetermined number of sets of foot orthotics, each set having a standard arch height that is unique for that set;

~~measuring an arch height of a sole of a foot; and~~

determining an arch height from a thermal image of a sole of a foot; and

selecting an orthotic from the set for which the standard arch height most closely matches the ~~measured~~ determined arch height.

Claim 2 (previously presented): The method of claim 1 wherein the predetermined number of sets is only three.

Claim 3-4 (canceled)

Claim 5 (previously presented): The method of claim 1 wherein the orthotics can be heat-softened and the method further comprises the step, after the selecting step, of pressing the sole against the selected orthotic while the selected orthotic is installed in a shoe in a heat-softened state for the orthotic to conform to the shape of the sole.

Claim 6 (currently amended): A method comprising:

engaging a sole of a foot against a thermal imaging device while the foot is not in a shoe to obtain from the device a thermal image of the sole; and

determining ~~a characteristic~~ an arch height of the sole based on the thermal image.

Claim 7 (canceled)

Claim 8 (original): The method of claim 6 wherein the imaging device includes a thermally sensitive material that exhibits a change in color with a change in temperature.

Claim 9 (canceled)

Claim 10 (previously presented): The method of claim 8 wherein the sole is colder than the thermally sensitive material during the engaging step.

Claim 11 (previously presented): The method of claim 8 wherein the sole is warmer than the thermally sensitive material during the engaging step.

Claim 12 (previously presented): The method of claim 11 further comprising the step, before the engaging step, of warming the sole with a warming device.

Claim 13 (original): The method of claim 6 wherein the imaging device is in the form of a plate configured to lie flat on the ground, and the engaging step includes stepping on the device.

Claim 14 (canceled)

Claim 15 (previously presented): The method of claim 6 wherein the determining step includes determining pressure points of the sole based on the thermal image.

Claim 16 (previously presented): The method of claim 6 wherein the determining step includes determining restricted blood flow locations of the sole based on the thermal image.

Claims 17-28 (canceled)

Claim 29 (currently amended): A method comprising:

stocking a predetermined number of sets of foot orthotics on a merchandise rack positioned adjacent to a thermal imaging device, each set having a standard arch height that is unique for that set;

obtaining a thermal image of a foot sole from the imaging device;

determining an arch height of the foot sole from the thermal image; and

selecting an orthotic from the set for which the standard arch height most closely matches the measured arch height

~~The method of claim 1 wherein the stocking step includes stocking the foot orthotics on a merchandise rack positioned adjacent to a thermal imaging device, and the measuring step includes obtaining a thermal image of the foot sole from the imaging device and determining the arch height of the foot sole from the thermal image.~~

Claim 30 (previously presented): The method of claim 29 wherein, during the stocking step, the imaging device lies flat on a floor.

Claim 31 (previously presented): The method of claim 29 wherein, during the stocking step, the imaging device is located in front of the rack.

Claim 32-34 (canceled)

Claim 35 (previously presented): A method comprising:

engaging a sole of a foot against a thermal imaging device to obtain from the device a thermal image of the sole; and

determining an arch height of the sole based on the thermal image.

Claim 36 (previously presented): The method of claim 35 wherein the imaging device includes a thermally sensitive material that exhibits a change in color with a change in temperature.

Claim 37 (previously presented): The method of claim 36 wherein the device includes a rigid surface, and the thermally sensitive material lies flat over the rigid surface so as to prevent the material from bending when the sole is engaged against the device.

Claim 38 (previously presented): The method of claim 35 further comprising the step, before the engaging step, of warming the sole with an electrical warming device.

Claim 39 (previously presented): The method of claim 35 wherein the imaging device has a flat top surface, and the engaging step includes stepping on the top surface and the thermal image appearing on the top surface.

Claim 40 (previously presented): A method comprising:

engaging a sole of a foot against a thermal imaging device to obtain from the device a thermal image of the sole, the imaging device including a thermally sensitive material, that exhibits a change in color with a change in temperature, lying flat over a rigid surface that prevents the material from bending when the sole is engaged against the device; and
determining a characteristic of the sole based on the thermal image.

Claim 41 (previously presented): The method of claim 40 wherein the engaging step includes standing on the imaging device.

Claim 42 (previously presented): The method of claim 40 wherein the characteristic is an arch height of the sole.

Claim 43-45 (canceled)

Claim 46 (previously presented): A method comprising:

warming a thermally sensitive material to a temperature that is warmer than a sole of a foot, the material being part of a thermal imaging device and configured to exhibit a change in color with a change in temperature;

engaging the sole against the device to obtain from the material a thermal image of the sole based on different locations on the material being cooled by the sole to different extents; and
determining a characteristic of the sole based on the thermal image.

Claim 47 (previously presented): The method of claim 46 wherein the characteristic is an arch height of the sole.